

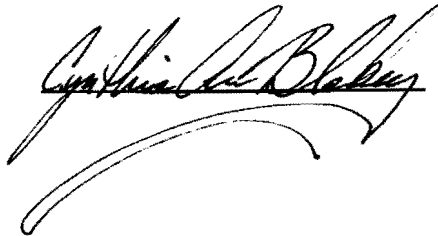
**Dancing With a Horse:  
Using Nutrition to Ride Longer & Stronger  
(Dressage Nutrition from a Dancer's Perspective)**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

Tiffany Parker

Thesis Advisor  
Dr. Ann Blakey

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia L. Blakey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the main text.

Ball State University  
Muncie, Indiana

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Graduation Date: May 2009

## **ABSTRACT**

In many sports, athletes are able to choose from a variety of sport-specific diet and exercise plans. Despite the high fitness levels and extreme muscle control required by dressage riding, exercise plans have only become available in recent years, and sport-specific diet plans are still lacking. It is difficult to find reliable sources of information regarding rider nutrition, and those resources that do approach the topic do so only generally, with little practical advice. Presented is an evaluation and discussion of available, current resources providing dietary and nutritional information for rider use.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2: Inadequacy of Resources .....	4
Caloric Needs of the Rider .....	4
Available Rider-Specific Diet Resources .....	7
Chapter 3: What is Still Needed .....	11
Discussion of Dressage versus Ballet .....	11
Cause for Concern .....	13
Existing Resources .....	13
Recommendations from the Dancer .....	14
Method of Publication .....	16
Conclusion .....	16
WORKS CITED .....	17
APPENDICES: Transcripts of Personal Interviews .....	18
Appendix A: Transcript of Interview with Emily Slaven on 3/29/09 at Fox Run Farm, Daleville, IN .....	19
Appendix B: Transcript of Interview with Charlotte Jones on 4/22/09 at her home, Muncie, IN .....	26

## LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES

### FIGURES

Figure 1 - Anky van Grunsven, eight-time World Cup Dressage Champion .....	2
Figure 2 - A Level 2 dressage rider .....	3

### TABLES

Table 1 - Average number of years of riding experience when testing at each US Dressage Level .....	2
Table 2 - Internet Sources providing information regarding caloric use during equine activities .....	5
Table 3 - Styles of Riding .....	7
Table 4 - Exercise components of various equine activities .....	15

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

In a sport where even beginners need to have “decent baseline fitness – specifically, functional strength and flexibility, and sufficient aerobic fitness to [participate] for thirty to forty-five minutes without stopping” (Bryant, 2006, p. 253), it would be reasonable to assume that information regarding exercise and nutrition would be abundantly available. More experienced participants require even greater levels of physical fitness. For all these athletes, particularly in dressage, however, this is not the case. The information available currently focuses primarily on exercise fitness, almost to the exclusion of nutrition.

Riders face a near complete lack of sport-specific information about nutrition. As one Internet site put it, “You know you’re a horse lover when...you know more about equine nutrition than human nutrition” (You Know You’re, n.d.). An Internet search of the topic confirms the sad truth of this anecdote. While an initial glance at photos of dressage riders would suggest a standard of long, slender bodies (Figure 1), a quick Google image search of “Level 2 Dressage” (an intermediate level for riders with a significant amount of experience, as seen in Table 1) confirms the lack of proper eating and exercise habits for amateur riders (Figure 2). While the high-end amateur and professional riders exhibit the long thin limbs and straight posture desired by many, the amateur riders tend to

be slightly rounder in shape with more significant bulky muscle development. This is highlighted by the existence of a relatively new company, “Fuller Fillies” which caters to larger riders and estimates on their website that “in the UK...2 million [or more] lady riders... fall into the ‘16 plus’ size range!” (Information, n.d.).

**Figure 1 – Anky van Grunsven, eight-time World Cup Dressage Champion**



picture © Dirk Caremans/www.hippofoto.be

**Table 1 – Average number of years of riding experience when testing at each US Dressage Level**

Level	Average amount of Training
Introductory	Any time
Training Level	9 months
First Level	1.5 years
Second Level	2 years
Third Level and Beyond	2 years and more

*\*Training level information obtained from Figure 7 of The Elements of Dressage by Kurd Albrecht Von Ziegner*

In recent years, dressage riders have seen an increase in the amount of exercise-based information available to them. Websites, books, DVDs, and

riding magazines all provide suggested workouts designed to do everything from building a “better seat” (Hourdebaigt, 2007) to “[achieving] oneness with your horse” (Dennis, McCully, & Jorris, 2004). Today, riders have many options when it comes to fitness programs and exercise routines, but still relatively little information providing help with diet and nutrition.

**Figure 2 – A Level 2 dressage rider**



Picture: [http://www.oldpeoplesridingclub.org/Awards/year\\_end\\_award/Meet\\_our\\_Winners.htm](http://www.oldpeoplesridingclub.org/Awards/year_end_award/Meet_our_Winners.htm)

The shelves of any bookseller are filled with diet advice and nutrition information for the general, non-riding population. Within busy schedules, few riders have the time or the know-how to sort through this enormous amount of information and decide what is most relevant and beneficial for their specific needs. When presented with the possibility of spending hours in a library or bookstore pouring through resources of questionable applicability, most will choose to spend that free time in the barn riding.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Inadequacy of Resources**

#### ***Caloric Needs of the Rider***

As previously discussed, the amount of information available to riders about their own nutrition is extremely limited. It is common knowledge that exercise burns calories. Therefore, it may be commonplace for riders to overeat as a result of overestimating the number of calories burned during a typical excursion to the barn. Few sources provide estimates of caloric use during common equine activities, and existing information in the area remains somewhat conflicting.

Web sources that do include equine activities often fail to specify the intensity of riding used for the calculation. Others fail to include information about the weight of the rider used for the calculations. Table 2 provides the information regarding caloric use at the barn from all Internet sources found upon extensive Internet search between November 18 and April 20, 2009.

The first problem to be noted is the scarce amount of information. It is difficult to find a web source that includes information about calorie use during barn activities. Beyond that, the reliability of the available sources could be debated, as the websites varied from dieting websites to personal websites to

**Table 2 – Internet Sources providing information regarding caloric use during equine activities**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Rider Weight</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Calories Burned</b>
Health Status Internet Assessments <a href="http://www.healthstatus.com/calculate/cbc">http://www.healthstatus.com/calculate/cbc</a>	User input	Grooming Walking Trotting Galloping	Dependent upon user input Dependent upon user input Dependent upon user input Dependent upon user input
Calorie Count on About.com <a href="http://caloriecount.about.com/calories-burned-horseback-riding-a413">http://caloriecount.about.com/calories-burned-horseback-riding-a413</a>	150 lbs.	General saddling, grooming trotting walking	272 calories/hour 238 calories/hour 442 calories/hour 170 calories/hour
My-Calorie-Counter.com <a href="http://www.my-calorie-counter.com/Calories_Burned.asp">http://www.my-calorie-counter.com/Calories_Burned.asp</a>	User Input	General saddling, grooming trotting walking	Dependent upon user input Dependent upon user input Dependent upon user input Dependent upon user input
Emerald Springs Ranch Website <a href="http://www.emerald-springs.com/facts/calories.html">http://www.emerald-springs.com/facts/calories.html</a>	120 lbs.	horseback riding	200 calories/hour
	150 lbs.	horseback riding	240 calories/hour
Pearl Haven Ranch Website <a href="http://www.pearl-haven-ranch.com/benefits.html">http://www.pearl-haven-ranch.com/benefits.html</a>	Not given	Hacking out Mucking out Schooling a horse	240 calories/hour 480 calories/hour 360 calories/hour
	150 lbs.	Riding	315–480/calories/hour
Horselife.com  <a href="http://www.horselife.com/horse-activities/horse-activities/horseback-riding-as-exercise.html">http://www.horselife.com/horse-activities/horse-activities/horseback-riding-as-exercise.html</a>	160 lbs. 200 lbs.	"Riding twice a week"	1000 calories/week 1200 calories/week
	Not given	Grooming and saddling walking trotting cantering	120 calories/30 minutes 90 calories/30 minutes 140 calories/20 minutes 90 calories/10 minutes

websites advertising for barns and riding instructors. There seem to be no resources offered by people or organizations that could be considered an authority on nutrition or on horseback riding. Additionally, none of the sources cited any studies or peer reviewed journals as the source of their information.

Another issue with the available information is the complete lack of consistency in the rider weight used for calculation. With weights varying from one hundred and twenty to two hundred pounds, this variation makes comparison of information nearly impossible. According to the Center for Disease Control, in the United States in 2002, the average weight of an adult male was 191 pounds, while the average weight of an adult female was 164.3 pounds (Center for Health Statistics, 2004). While [horselife.com](http://horselife.com) provided calculations based on rider weights similar to the average, few of the other sources used such typical weights for their calculations. Most sources calculate for a rider weighing a mere 150 pounds. From that point, the rider is left to extrapolate his or her own calorie burn.

The sources that allow users to input their own weight are convenient because they provide a more personalized view of the information and prevent users from attempting to draw their own conclusions based on a given weight. While convenient, the comparison with other sources is not immediately evident, adding steps for riders who wish to check the accuracy of the tool against another information source.

Several aspects are not addressed on these websites, at all. There is no mention of which style of riding is being used for calculation. When considering trotting, none of the sources mentioned which rider activity during the trot, such as posting, two-point, sitting, etc., was being analyzed. None of the sources mentioned which of the many types of saddles (if any) was being used or which style of riding was being practice (Table 3), which makes a significant difference in the difficulty level of the riding activity.

**Table 3 – Styles of Riding**

<b>English (forward seat)</b>
Jumper
Dressage
Saddleseat
All Purpose
Eventing
<b>Western (stock seat)</b>
Pleasure/trail riding
Eventing
Endurance
Racing
Bareback

A final problem with these sources is a lack of consistency in units of measurement. Some show calories burned in an hour, a half hour, or a certain number of minutes. Horselife.com, for example, calculated the calorie burn for cantering over the course of ten minutes. This detail adds yet another step (unit conversion) to the already lengthy process of locating and evaluating the available information for the rider's needs.

### ***Available Rider-Specific Diet Resources***

Entire works dedicated to the nutritional needs of the rider are non-existent, however some available books, magazines, and websites may contain a chapter or article that approaches the topic. These sources vary in length, clarity, depth, and accuracy. In the following paragraphs, several sources will be examined. While they do not represent all available resources, they serve to provide a snapshot of the types of nutrition information available to riders today.

Within *The USDF Guide to Dressage* (2006), the official guide for the sport, there is a full chapter dedicated to “The Fit Dressage Rider.” This chapter, which is fifteen pages in length, covers the topics of strength, flexibility, endurance, nutrition, and special concerns for pregnant riders. Of these fifteen pages, only a mere half page covers the subject of nutrition. It encourages the rider not to “overlook the importance of eating right” (Bryant, 2006, p. 266), but fails to outline precisely what that means. Nearly half of the nutrition section is focused on staying hydrated. This leaves a mere two short paragraphs to explain a proper diet for a rider, which it condenses down to “[making] wise food choices,” “[knowing] your body’s likes and dislikes...” and “eating simple, healthful foods that are low in fat” (Bryant, 2006, p. 267). It sums up the chapter by stating “The best nutritional advice is to pay attention to how different foods make you feel” (Bryant, 2006, p. 267). While this is not necessarily unsound advice, it is far from sufficient for helping a rider who may not be “in tune” with his or her body enough to recognize the signs and symptoms of a poor diet.

*The Rider's Fitness Program* (2004), the first result when searching for "rider fitness" on Amazon.com, arranges seventy-four exercises into eighteen different equestrian-centered workouts. Within its fitness program, the book suggests the importance of proper nutrition, albeit very briefly, in a four-paragraph section on "Other Fitness Issues" (Dennis et al., 2004, p. 4). Impressively, it touches on issues beyond merely eating a balanced diet; suggesting that riders have specific and specialized needs. While citing the need for vitamin supplement, proper bone care through diet, and a diet conducive to muscle, ligament, and tendon repair, it fails to provide any information on how to achieve these goals. Rather, it simply refers riders to a "doctor who is well versed in athletes' needs and practices" (Dennis et al., 2004, p. 5). This could be problematic, as a doctor familiar with the needs of a football player, for example, may not be as knowledgeable about the needs of a rider, as riding is a very specialized sport.

*The New Total Rider: Health and Fitness for the Equestrian* devotes the greatest number of pages, an entire chapter, to "The Nutrition Advantage" (Holmes, 2001, p. 81). This chapter, however, was written by an Ayurvedic expert, and is written from an Ayurvedic perspective. Because of the spiritual involvement of Ayurveda, many riders may discount this nutritional approach because of existing religious or spiritual beliefs. After a brief section discussing the importance of eating fresh organic foods, and decreasing protein consumption, a large part of this chapter is devoted to helping the rider determine his or her dosha, or the unique combination of elements that comprises a person

(Holmes, 2001). These results are then interpreted, with dietary suggestions based on the results of the self-analysis. The focus of this chapter is on overall good eating habits, with very little of it dedicated specifically to the rider. The small amount of sports nutrition information may easily be overlooked as a result of the somewhat spiritual nature of this chapter.

All in all, the current print and Internet sources that have been examined are insufficient for guiding a rider's nutritional choices. Many resources fail to cite peer-reviewed sources or medical studies for their information. Print resources are extremely limited and are currently confined to books about overall rider health. In many cases, they rely on self-analysis rather than giving concrete nutritional advice. Considering the enormous amount of nutritional resources available to ballet dancers, one would expect to find more plentiful resources in the area of nutrition for dressage riders, one partner in a dance with a horse.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **What is Still Needed**

#### ***Discussion of Dressage versus Ballet***

To those unacquainted with ballet, it would seem unusual for a comparison of ballet and horseback riding. After all, they would seem to be very different and unrelated sports. With a little bit of research, however, one can come to see the many similarities between ballet and dressage.

The first and most easily recognized similarity is the dance-like movements executed by the dressage horse. In fact, some of the movements performed by the horses borrow their names from ballet, such as the "pirouette" and the "cabriole." Further, for the rider, working with a horse is very much like partnering in dance. Though ballet is a less adequate comparison than a social dance such as swing, in which partners must maintain a gentle tension through their arms in order to communicate upcoming steps, just as a rider maintains a gentle contact through the bit to communicate with the horse.

Another similarity between the dressage rider and a ballet dancer is in the body type. Unlike the dense, muscular body type required by gymnastics, both ballet and dressage favor the long, lean look of thin limbs with toned muscles, rather than the bulk that makes obvious the work required for the sport.



This is not to say that ballet and dressage are identical, of course. For the dancer transitioning to dressage, several major issues present themselves. Firstly, the extreme flexing of the foot that is required to keep the heel down in the iron has a very different feeling than ballet, in which one must keep all weight on the ball of the foot and spend a great deal more time pointing than flexing. Also, the overwhelming “energy” of ballet carries the dancer higher, making her feel light. This is not necessarily a bad thing when riding, until one needs to stop. Should a dancer lose control of her horse, she will resort to her training and “lift up” in order to try to regain control. Were she in a ballet class, this would be a fantastic strategy and would probably result in regained balance and increased muscular control. On the horse however, the wavering dancer has just asked her horse to speed up. Obviously, this presents a problem.

One place where there are few differences between the dancer and the dressage rider is in the area of nutritional needs. Both groups need to maintain lean bodies to reduce the amount of weight on the toe or the horse, respectively. To achieve this, diet must be closely monitored and adapted each day according to the intensity and duration of exercise for that day. Calories and fat must be regulated to avoid weight gain. Vitamins and minerals should be at recommended levels to avoid side effects resulting from deficiencies. Anti-inflammatory and other healing foods can be of great benefit to both groups as they fight swelling, stiffness, overuse injury, and eventual arthritis. Both groups can benefit from diet plans that would help them perform longer and stay in better shape.

### ***Cause for Concern***

While the need for dancers to be slim and fit is immediately obvious, the need for physically fit riders is not as evident. The first and perhaps most important reason that riders are in need of nutritional instruction is to avoid placing undue stress on their horses. Many breeds have been intentionally modified to achieve a slender look, reducing the amount of weight these horses can safely carry (Horse Protection Society of North Carolina, n.d.). Once loaded with the rider (the size of which has been *growing* over the years) and the saddle, these horses can easily become overburdened, leading to injury.

Another major issue with poor rider nutrition is the reduced resilience of the body as a result of vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Traumatic injuries, from being stepped on to being thrown off the horse entirely, are commonplace in equestrian pursuits. However, many riders fail to care for their bodies in a way that could lessen the injuries that result from common accidents. A simple increase in calcium and vitamin D, coupled with weight-bearing exercise can increase bone density and decrease the chances of broken bones (Blake, 2009). Aside from traumatic injuries, riders can also suffer from chronic injuries resulting from overuse of muscles, tendons, and ligaments. Proper nutrition can aid in recovery from these conditions as well as serve to assist the body in creating healthier, more injury-resistant tissue (Blake, 2009).

### ***Existing Resources***

Few existing resources approach the specific needs of the rider. Most rider-focused health resources focus primarily on exercise, leaving a few

paragraphs or a chapter at best, to give some basic nutritional advice. It is rare to find a resource that explains why riders in particular are in need of good nutrition, and exactly what that means. Most books simply state to eat a balanced or healthy diet, without ever defining the terms or providing assistance to the rider in designing healthful meal plans.

Future research in the area of rider nutrition could expand to focus on the specific rider-centered reasons for various nutritional guidelines. For example, putting daily calcium requirements into the context of preventing bone injuries resulting from a fall from a horse may motivate riders to apply these principles. Therefore, determining the most common injuries suffered by riders of different disciplines would be a first step in this research, which could then begin to focus on how nutrition could play a role in preventing these injuries.

### ***Recommendations from the Dancer***

Based on research with the current rider-focused nutrition sources combined with ten years of professional-level ballet training and over one-hundred and fifty hours spent riding and caring for horses, several recommendations can be made regarding rider nutrition. Firstly, riders need to be conscious of the time spent in the barn and be cautious not to overestimate the number of calories burned while there. While many of the common equine activities do include some element of exercise, few of them serve as aerobic activity, which increases metabolism (Table 4). Because of this, riders should avoid overcompensating for barn activities by overeating on riding days as well

as on days away from the barn. Only a slight calorie increase is necessary to compensate for the calories burned at the barn.

Next, riders need to be sure to consume an adequate amount of protein, vitamins, and minerals. Riding requires a great deal of muscle strength and control. A deficiency in any of a great number of vitamins and minerals can impair the body's ability to properly transmit messages to the muscles or for the muscles themselves to contract. Eating a fruit and vegetable-heavy diet with moderate amounts of protein helps to ensure that these needs are being met.

**Table 4 - Exercise components of various equine activities**

<b>Barn Activities</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Aerobic</b>	<b>Weight Lifting</b>	<b>Stretching</b>
Feeding		x	x
Mucking stalls	x	x	x
Turning out/bringing in	x		

<b>Preparation for Riding</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Aerobic</b>	<b>Weight Lifting</b>	<b>Stretching</b>
Picking feet		x	x
Brushing	x		x
Saddling		x	x
Horse Massage		x	x
Bathing			x

<b>Riding</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Aerobic</b>	<b>Weight Lifting</b>	<b>Stretching</b>
Walk			x
Trot, sitting	x		x
Trot, two-point	x	x	x
Trot, posting	x	x	x
Canter	x		
Gallop	x		

Finally, riders need to be sure to adequately hydrate themselves. Water is the best option as it is free from calories, carbonation, and added sugars. Sports drinks are a good option for hot summer days or endurance riders, but are not

generally necessary for shorter rides on a typical day. Overuse of these products increases calorie and sugar consumption and can have a negative effect on the teeth (Hobson, 2007).

### ***Method of Publication***

Interviews with several riders have revealed time and convenience to be major factors when researching (or failing to research) proper nutritional and exercise habits. Riders often lack time to sift through information and would benefit from its existence within other resources. For example, existing magazines for riders could offer columns answering nutrition-related questions, suggesting meals and recipes, or providing information about general nutritional concepts. Existing organizations such as the United States Dressage Federation could sponsor lectures and classes on nutrition at existing conferences and seminars. These modes of communication reduce the amount of work required for the rider and improve the accessibility. Providing the information in these venues may also improve the sense of relevance to riding.

### ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, it is only through an increase in research and education by experts in the fields of exercise science and nutrition working with experts in equestrian sports that the area of proper rider nutrition will grow to match the readily available resources for athletes from other disciplines.

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# **APPENDICES**

## **Transcripts of Personal Interviews**

### **Appendix A**

Transcript of Interview with Emily Slaven  
on 3/29/09 at Fox Run Farm, Daleville, IN

### **Appendix B**

Transcript of Interview with Charlotte Jones  
on 4/22/09 at her home, Muncie, IN

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Transcript of Interview with Emily Slaven on 3/29/09 at Fox Run Farm, Daleville, IN**

Tiffany: We'll just start out with some basic sort of information, for the record.

What's your name?

Emily: Emily Slaven

Tiffany: And what's your occupation?

Emily: I'm a physical therapist

Tiffany: Um...and how long have you been riding horses?

Emily: I would say about twenty-four years

Tiffany: What styles do you...

Emily: English...um, I do dressage and I also jump and do some eventing as well.

Tiffany: You said that you do physical therapy. Do you work a lot with riders?

Emily: Um, I wouldn't say a lot with riders. Certainly, I do get to see some riders come in with injuries and rehab them. Muncie isn't a hot bed for horses, and some of the horse people are more Western and they may not tend to go for rehab as much as other parts of the country.

Tiffany: What do you think are the most common types of injuries that riders see?

Emily: Well, I see people with back problems, and tendonitis of the elbow, and usually those kinds of things. Sometimes it's falls, so it's trauma that causes their problem. Sometimes it's overuse. You know, overactivity of a particular



muscle that can't withstand the stress and that's when they have an issue, and it breaks down, and we see them.

Tiffany: So what sorts of things do you do to treat those riders once they come in?

Emily: Well, a priority would be to get their pain under control, and obviously, if it's been a traumatic event, it's just a case of getting them back to what they're doing. If it's more of a biomechanical issue, where their mechanics and what they're doing is not correct, you'll have to start addressing, you know, riding, or other mechanisms that might have triggered the response. It's really two-fold depending on whether it's trauma or overuse.

Tiffany: So do you think a lot of those injuries are preventable?

Emily: Um, a fair number I see are trauma, so you know, horses are...you never know what's going to happen, as we saw today. Um, so I think there's always going to be some element of trauma that happens with horses because you can't always anticipate what they're going to do.

Tiffany: So what do you personally do to try to prevent some of those just like, overuse injuries?

Emily: In myself?

Tiffany: yeah, just personally.

Emily: I really work hard. When I go to the gym, I'm working on core exercises because I think having good core strength helps a lot because if you're strong through the middle, it doesn't put as much stress particularly on the arms. For me it doesn't bother my hips or knees or whatever, but sometimes if I'm

riding a horse that is very, um, challenging, I feel like I'm doing a lot with my arms and I can, my shoulders can get sore. And I'm really, if I'm stronger through the middle, I'm less likely to put as much stress in my arms and my shoulders.

Tiffany: So do you recommend doing Pilates and yoga sorts of things for people to...

Emily: Definitely Pilates, I think is a good option. Now yoga obviously works a lot of flexibility. Um, but yeah, having a good strong core I think helps tremendously with balance and with the ability to ride more effectively.

Tiffany: Have you done any cross training? I know you said you work out, but have you tried swimming, or any other exercises?

Emily: I have in the past. Um, I actually for several years did triathlons. That was when I came...eh, ten, eleven years ago. And then, really enjoyed horse riding more. Got my own horse here in the states, and um, really felt that I was going to one thing...triathlons take a lot of time. My husband does a lot of triathlons, and I thought I'd rather spend my time at the horse barn, riding horses, and I moved away from it. So, I still swim OK. I do a lot of running. I run, eh, about twenty-five miles a week, and I, uh, I don't do it so often now, but I've run a couple of marathons in the past. But that really helps with the leg strength but it doesn't do much for my core so that's why I do a lot of swiss ball work and strengthen my abs.

Tiffany: So you think the running and swimming and stuff helps your riding?

Emily: Um, I don't think it particularly helps it. I think working out at the gym and getting a stronger core is better. But I think overall, if you've got better cardiovascular fitness, I think it helps you, um, continue, you know, exercising for longer on the horse.

Tiffany: Makes sense. Um, I don't know how much experience you have with this sort of thing, but I don't know if you've ever worked with overweight riders, and what sort of consequences they may face or their *horse* may face, even.

Emily: Um, that's a tough, yeah, because there are a lot of people who like to ride, but maybe their BMI is over the recommended level. Um, definitely you want to try to work with them to get stronger and the goal, if you've got any input, is to make sure they're on the correct horse that they're not putting additional stress on the horse that the horse can't tolerate. Um, but I think even with them, they can start with core exercises because a lot of good upper-level dressage riders if you ever see them on the street you'd think "they're a little heavy," but when you watch them on the horse, it looks effortless. So, um, I think certainly it's a sport that allows people to be a little heavier. One of the best US eventers, three-day eventers, is Becky Holder, and she rides a horse called Courageous Comet, a big grey, and she's what I would consider a heavy-set lady. But, watching them go cross-country at Kentucky, at Rolex, you know, not a bother to them. It's really quite incredible to watch them ride. But you kinda think, well, being heavy-set doesn't necessarily mean that you can't be successful, but I think you have to be still strong.

Tiffany: And more careful about the horse that you...

Emily: Yeah, that it's a good match.

Tiffany: Um, have you every tried any sort of modified diet to supplement your riding, or nutritional supplements, or anything like that?

Emily: Um, I wouldn't say so much to supplement my diet for riding. Um, I'm obviously careful about what I eat and when eat. I struggle sometimes, I do a lot of my riding during the eveningtime during the week because of working, and I have to be careful about what I eat because sometimes I get what I call "the jitters," but I basically get a sugar dropout and I'm on my horse I don't feel well enough to ride, and I have to get off and eat some protein or something to um....so I have to be careful from that point of view. But overall diet, probably not. I eat everything I want to eat. I don't eat excessively. One or the other. Sometimes I think "Eh, it'd be nice to be a little slimmer," but you've got to have some energy to ride, and I think that's important. Depending on the event, some people, if they ride all day for a living, their needs are a little different than mine, where I might just ride for an hour, a couple of times a week.

Tiffany: Have you heard of any riders doing things like taking glucosamine or anti-inflammatory diets or anything like that?

Emily: No....and I think as people get older, and I know a lot of riders do take the pills. I mean, the lady I board with, she's in her mid- to late sixties and she still rides. And she competes in high-level dressage. And I know she has

problems with her hips and has to take some anti-inflammatories to allow her to keep riding. But nothing in particular with her diet, I don't think.

Tiffany: What is your primary source for information and advice about exercise and nutrition?

Emily: Probably the website....uh, the world wide web. I do get some magazines, some dressage magazines, some different horse magazines that I will read the articles that they talk about, but a lot of the time, the information about exercise for riders is stuff that I already know because of my job, but, it's not really *that* advanced. But, I would say probably the web. I do a fair bit of reading.

Tiffany: So, what sorts of websites do you use? More rider specific website, or do you look on just general site?

Emily: Usually just rider-specific. Um, and there's a number of them out there, and I usually don't go to them that often so I usually have to Google and then I kind of pick out what I want. I don't have one site that I go to all the time. And, I've never really felt with my diet, because I eat a fairly rounded diet, and I'm fairly active through the day, I've never had to modify my diet that much because of my riding needs.

Tiffany: Right. I had mentioned earlier the yoga and pilates stuff. Recently there have been a lot of "Pilates for Riders" and "Yoga for Riders" have you tried any of those have you looked into any of them?

Emily: I haven't personally tried them. I would love to, when I have time. I think that as I grow older, I plan to continue to ride, so I would like to make sure

that I can stay healthy enough to continue that, and, but no. I have not personally looked into that, but I think it's a good idea. I think a lot of people who ride maybe don't do any other cross-training, like I run, so that kind of makes up for some of that, and I go to the gym and I have exercise equipment at home, too, so I lift weights a couple of times a week when I can work it in.

Tiffany: Um, and what sorts of resources do you think would be beneficial for riders today...if they were available?

Emily: I definitely think, and I'm sure you've seen as you've been doing your research, that there are books out there now, and that sort of information. But I think it'd be helpful if associations like the Indiana Dressage Association, it would be helpful for them to maybe, hold seminars, you know, about Pilates. They do educational seminars about horse care, but you know, educating people about, they think a lot about "how does a horse get better, how does a horse get better," but I think people tend to forget about how could they be physically more ready to ride and move up the levels, so, I think individual groups like that could be helpful. I think having information in the magazines, most people who ride get at least one of the magazines, whether it be *Dressage Today* or *Practical Horsemanship*, I think having that information in there would be helpful, too.

Tiffany: Alright, well, that's all the questions I had for you today, so thanks for talking with me. I really appreciate it.

Emily: Oh, not a problem!

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Transcript of Interview with Charlotte Jones on 4/22/2009 at her home in Muncie, IN**

Tiffany: Alright! What is your name?

Charlotte: Charlotte Jones.

Tiffany: And what is your occupation?

Charlotte: I'm a secretary.

Tiffany: And how long have you ridden?

Charlotte: I've ridden off and on since I was twelve.

Tiffany: and what styles do you do?

Charlotte: I do dressage now.

Tiffany: And what else have you done over the years?

Charlotte: I've done jumping. I've done barrel racing and cutting, western riding.

Tiffany: So what are the most common types of injuries that either you've gotten,  
or just from being around other riders, that you've seen?

Charlotte: Probably being stepped on. I think that's probably the most common.

Tiffany: Have you noticed any other either trauma or overuse sorts of things?

Charlotte: Yeah, tennis elbow. I've got tennis elbow from Joe, because he pulls.  
Then there's being thrown off. I've been fallen on! Not by Joseph, but a horse  
that I had as a kid fell on me, threw me into a barbed wire fence, I still have  
scars from that...some people don't learn! I've been tossed from Joseph  
several times.

Tiffany: So you've had a couple of traumatic-type injuries

Charlotte: And then I was tossed from Donas. He tossed me and broke my rib.

Tiffany: How were those different kinds of injuries treated? I mean, obviously with being stepped on your just kind of have to let your toe heal, but what about the others, like the tennis elbow?

Charlotte: Tennis elbow...anti-inflammatories, rest, ice is very effective.

Tiffany: Did you have any kind of physical therapy or anything like that?

Charlotte: [smiles] No...

Tiffany: were you supposed to?

Charlotte: Well, I, you know...it probably would have been better and quicker if I had, but I just don't have time.

Tiffany: Right. I understand that. As far as the injuries that you observe, do you think they could have been prevented by proper nutrition or exercise?

Charlotte: Yeah, I think the stronger you are and the better you know your body...as a dancer, you don't understand this, but as somebody who in the last few years is finally doing some strength training, that has helped my riding more than anything else. More than all my practicing, all my riding, it's been just being able to get stronger. It helps me stay on, and it helps me also just in my riding because it helps me know where those muscles are now. Those muscles can do the things that I want them to do. So yeah, it's really been helpful. But diet, hm. Not so much.

Tiffany: So what measures do you personally take to try to avoid injuries?

Charlotte: I pray before I get on my horse! Lord, you gave me this horse, please keep me safe! [laughs]



Tiffany: Is that your primary prevention method?

Charlotte: No, I mean I do...I got a custom saddle to help me stay on. I felt like that would be worth its weight in hospital bills. Hm, other prevention things...I'm careful where I ride. The time I was injured, they had just scraped the arena floor back, and so I landed where it was very hard. If the arena had been normal, I wouldn't have been injured so badly.

Tiffany: Alright. Have you ever tried any modified diets or nutritional supplements to try to enhance your riding?

Charlotte: Nope.

Tiffany: Do you do anything...well, I know you said you do some strength training...but do you do any other kinds of cross-training, like running, walking, yoga, Pilates?

Charlotte: I do some walking. I do some Pilates in strength training.

Tiffany: Have you found that to be helpful?

Charlotte: Yeah, it's great. The core stuff is great. Really helpful. Before, they'd say "move your ribcage over." And I had no idea what that meant, but I understand now! I can actually do it now!

Tiffany: Good! So what is your primary source for getting information about exercise and nutrition?

Charlotte: Um...I don't know that I'm ever really seeking information on it, except maybe with my injuries...But nutrition, probably my doctor more than anything else, because he's very much into eating right and vitamin supplements and that kind of thing.

Tiffany: So, your doctor and then whatever you happen to stumble upon?

Charlotte: [laughs] Yeah! I just don't look up dieting very much.

Tiffany: Or exercise, too.

Charlotte: Yeah exercise. I actually just kind of got roped into this strength training class and I've found it very helpful. I used to run, just because I ran in college. Just because we had to earn aerobic points for our PE class and the fastest way to earn them was to run. It was three miles around campus, so I ran around campus. So, that's how I started running. I didn't do any, you know, and I thought "I need to do something" and I thought the cheapest form of exercise is just to buy a pair of shoes and run, and I knew how to do that. And I had some friends that were doing the mini-marathon. And so I trained for the mini with them and ran the mini-marathon. Then my doctor said "you need to stop running," so I haven't done that since then. He said "Walk! Enjoy the day. Take your time." [nods]

Tiffany: So that's what you did?

Charlotte: Yep.

Tiffany: Kind of changing gears a little bit, what do you think would be the consequences for both the horse and the rider if the rider has poor nutritional habits? Do you think there might be any? Or what might those be?

Charlotte: Well, I suppose if you ate sugared doughnuts all the time, you'd either be really sugar high or sugar low, which is really bad. And you'd probably be overweight, which makes it harder! It's harder for the horse, and speaking

from experience, it's harder to do what you need to do! Um, my nutrition or the horse's nutrition.

Tiffany: Your nutrition.

Charlotte: Well, energy levels and that kind of thing, and strength. There are times, I know, when I haven't eaten right and I know I'm going to be tired. And there were times when I was running, that if I'd had a piece of pie the day before, I knew I wasn't going to be able to run the next day. It was hard to run. I mean, I could do it, but it was hard. Look at the professional riders. They're lean mean, and well, they're doing other kinds of exercise besides just riding.

Tiffany: Are you aware of any rider-focused exercise or nutrition programs?

Charlotte: There is, there's an exercise program. What do they call it? It's sort of a Pilates for riders thing...I don't know if you've heard about it. But I've seen some demonstrations of it and such. So I know that exists. Nutrition stuff, I don't think so. I don't know anything about that, if it exists at all.

Tiffany: So you haven't personally tried any of the exercise programs like the Pilates?

Charlotte: I have not.

Tiffany: So what is the primary reason for not looking into those resources?

Charlotte: Time. Time to research. Time to do it. Time.

Tiffany: What sorts of resources would you like to see available to riders regarding exercise and nutrition? What do you think would be helpful...and convenient, since that seems to be a major factor!

Charlotte: Yeah, you know, a website would be great! That's probably the major thing. And you know, I'll tell you, when I first started riding here, and I asked about exercise, if there were any kinds of exercise I could do, because I could only afford to ride one lesson a week, and I knew that that wasn't enough to develop the muscles, and she said there isn't anything to do but riding. Which is not quite true. Now I know is not really true. Because really, any kind of strength training has been *very* helpful for me. So I know there isn't much out there exercise-wise, but a website would be great!

Tiffany: Alright, well, thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it!

Charlotte: You're welcome!